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ABSTRACT

This paper examines some of the rarely discussed aspects of Apachean classificatory verb stems with particular reference to Navajo and Western Apache. It is asserted that the concept of prototypes (and associated fuzziness) is useful in a description of Apachean classificatory verb stems, and that it can be used at two logically distinct levels of description: at the level of description of prototypical classificatory verb stems; and at the level of meaning and usage of a particular classificatory stem. (Contains 35 references.) (KFT)

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Prototypes and Fuzziness in the System and Usage of Apachean Classificatory Verb Stems

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The phenomenon of classificatory verb stems in Athabaskan languages is well known, and has been extensively discussed in the literature[1] In this paper, I will look at some little discussed aspects of Apachean classificatory verb stems, with particular reference to Navajo, the most studied Apachean language, and to Western Apache[2], an Apachean language I have researched extensively.[3] I assume that the ideas presented here also hold for the other subgroups of Athabaskan, but I have not researched those.

In the course of this paper, I will point out discrepancies between my analysis of Western Apache and that of Basso (1990) (originally published 1968), the only scholarly article on the Western Apache system of classificatory verbs. This article is a brilliant treatment in the genre of componential analysis, and resulting tree-like taxonomies, which were popular in the sixties. Let me point out right away that the purpose of this paper is not to critique Basso's article. The shortcomings in Basso's article are to a large extent due to the lack of theoretical frameworks which we can now take advantage of. Furthermore, one should also realize that this was one of Basso's earliest papers on Apache linguistics, written at a time when he had not been out of graduate school for long.

The theoretical background I will use is that of prototype theory, as discussed by Rosch (1975). The fundamental idea is that categorization of reality (linguistic or extralinguistic) is not done by dividing reality with sharp edges, so that an object must fall either in this category or in that category. Rather, when categorizing, the mind works with prototypes, which are "best examples" or "clearest cases" of a particular category. Around the prototype, there are various members of the category which have decreasing similarity to the prototype, or as Rosch (1975:179) puts it, "a decreasing degree of membership" in the category. It follows from this approach that the prototype of a particular category can be identified with some precision, but that boundaries around categories cannot. Because of the fact that the boundaries are unclear, I also find it useful to talk about

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fuzzy categories, a term first brought into the field of linguistics (from logic) by Lakoff (1972).

I will argue that the concept of prototypes (and associated fuzziness) is useful in a description of Apachean classificatory verb stems, and that it can be used at two logically distinct levels of description.

First, at the level of description of the system of classificatory verbs, it appears that there is a prototypical system of stems, and that there are stems which are not considered "best examples" of a classificatory verb stem. This explains why eliciting a complete system of classificatory verb stems for a particular Apachean language gives a variety of results, even though there is always a core set of stems volunteered. As a result, there is a lot of indeterminacy in the published descriptions of classificatory verb stem systems.

Second, at the level of the meaning and usage of a particular classificatory stem, there appear to be prototypical objects associated with a particular stem, but also non-prototypical objects, which are harder to elicit, and therefore are easily missed in descriptions.

Before treating these two points, I have to digress to limit the discussion to three of the five kinds of classificatory verbs distinguished for Navajo by Young and Morgan (1987:128). The five kinds of classificatory verbs in Navajo (and certainly in all Apachean) are given in (1).

(1)

ACTIVE TRANSITIVE:	HANDLE
	PROPEL
ACTIVE INTRANSITIVE:	MOVE INDEPENDENTLY
NEUTER INTRANSITIVE:	BE AT REST
NEUTER TRANSITIVE:	KEEP AT REST

Actually, there are only three distinct systems of verb stems involved in (1). HANDLE, BE AT REST, and KEEP AT REST are one verb stem system, PROPEL and MOVE INDEPENDENTLY form a second system and a third system respectively, although there is some overlap between the three systems. The system of classificatory verb stems I will discuss in this paper is the one used for HANDLE, BE AT REST, and KEEP AT REST, which is the best known, and the one which makes the most classificatory

distinctions.[4] In the rest of this paper, I will refer only to the kind of classificatory verb stems just defined, and call them 'classificatory stems' or 'stems' for short, and I will ignore the PROPEL and MOVE INDEPENDENTLY systems.

We are now ready to look at prototypes and fuzziness in this stem system. I attempt to list the stems involved for all Apachean languages in the chart (4) below. Since it is inconvenient to refer to these stems by their shapes or by their full meanings, I have devised a system of abbreviations allowing one to refer to them and to remember their basic meanings. The system is inspired by the abbreviations used in Young and Morgan (1987:128) for Navajo. The abbreviations, and what they stand for, are given in (2).

(2)

ANO	ANimate Object
BC	Bag and Contents
FFO	Flat Flexible Object
HM	Huge and Massive
LM	Liquid Matter
LPB	Load, Pack, Burden
MM	Mushy Matter
NCM	Non-Compact Matter
OC	Open Container
PFO	Plural Flexible Objects
PLO1	Plural Objects, Nr. 1
PLO2	Plural Objects, Nr. 2
SFO	Slender Flexible Object
SRO	Solid Roundish Object
SSO	Slender Stiff Object

Other abbreviations used in (4) are given in (3):

(3)

Nav.	Navajo
WA	Western Apache (San Carlos variety)
Chir.	Chiricahua Apache
Mesc.	Mescalero Apache
Jic.	Jicarilla Apache
Lip.	Lipan Apache
PA	Plains Apache (formerly called Kiowa-Apache)

(4) is the comparative stem chart for the Apachean languages, with the forms more or less in alphabetical order. The abbreviation glosses are accurate for Nav. and WA, and only partially accurate for the other languages. Parentheses or slashes mark dialectal variants. A dash means: 'not attested, and reasonably sure it does not exist' (I can only assert this for Nav. and for WA); a single question mark means: 'I am not sure that this is a classificatory stem'; a double question mark means: 'the stem with this meaning has not been recorded for this language'. Only the Neuter Perfective mode stem forms are given. Nav. forms are from Young and Morgan (1987:128-133, 194-195); WA forms are from my own fieldnotes; Chir. and Mesc. from Hoijer's unpublished stem lists (ca. [1930]); Jic. from Hoijer (1938, 1945, 1946), Vicenti (1981), and Wilson (1996); Lip. from (Hoijer (1938, 1945, 1946a, 1946b, 1975), and Hoijer's unpublished texts ([n.d.]), and PA from Hoijer's ([ca. 1935]) and Bittle's ([ca. 1952-1956]) unpublished fieldnotes.

(4) Comparative chart of Apachean classificatory verb stems

Nav.	WA	Chir.	Mesc.	Jic.	Lip.	PA	
-'ą́	-'ą̄ą̄	-'ą́	-'ą́	-'ą́	-'ą́	-'ą́ą́	SRO
-jaa'	-jaa(')	-jaa	-jaa(j)	-jei/-jai	-jaa	-jaa'/h	PLO2
-ką́	-ką̄ą̄	-ką́	-ką́	-ką́	-ką́	-ką́ą́	CC
-lá	-lāā	-lá	-lá	-lá	-lá	-láá	SFO
[-]	-né'	-'į̄į̄	[??]	-'į́į́	-nii	-'į́'/-'į́h	PFO
-nil	-nil	-nil	-nil	[??]	-niɬ	-niɬ	PLO1
-tį́	-tį̄į̄	-tį́	-tį́	-kį́	-kį́	-chį́į́	ANO
-tą́	-tą̄ą̄	-tą́	-tą́	-ką́	[??]	-ką́ą́	SSO
[-]	-ɬtą̄ą̄	[??]	-ɬtą́	-ɬką́	[??]	-ɬką́ą́	BC
-tɬéé'	-tɬēēd/g	-tɬé	-tɬé	-tɬé	[??]	-tɬéé [?]	MM
-jool	-tsoo(')	[??]	[??]	[??]	[??]	[??]	NCM
-tsooz	-tsooz	-tsooz	-tsoodz	-tsoos	-tsoos	-tsoos	FFO
-yį́	-ghį̄į̄	-ghį́	-ghį́	-ghį́	-ghái	-ghį́į́	LPB
-ziid	-ziid/g	[??]	-zii [?]	[??]	[??]	[??]	LM
-zhóód	[-]	-zhó	-zhóó	[??]	-zhoo [?]	-zhóó [?]	HM

Here are some comments on chart (4). I have the most reliable and complete data for Nav., and WA, and I am sure that there must be gaps in the data, particularly for Jic. and Lip.[5] Nav. doesn't have a PFO, but other languages have one, possibly representing two etymologically separate stems, one for Chir., Jic., and PA, another for WA and Lip. The BC stem, which is really the SSO stem with a prefixed thematic classifier -*ɬ*-, is well attested in all three branches of Athabaskan, and so must be reconstructed for Proto-Athabaskan, and one can assume that Nav. lost it. A separate NCM stem is only attested in Nav. and WA, and the stems in question are not cognate. The stem -tsoo(') does not exist in Nav.; WA -jool does exist, but has to do with being ball-shaped or curling up, and is not used like a classificatory stem. There exists a WA stem -zhōōd or -zhōōg, apparently the cognate of Nav. HM, but it refers to a limp or hanging flexible object, and is not used like a classificatory stem.

We are now ready for a discussion of prototypicality in stem systems. The Nav. HANDLE verbs in Young and Morgan (1987:128) (and most pedagogical materials) number eleven stems, instead of the proposed thirteen in (4), since a LM and a HM stem are not included. However, Young and Morgan's list of AT REST stems in (1987:194) has the thirteen stems, including LM (called "pourable" by them), and HM (called "huge" by them). Apparently, Young and Morgan consider the list of AT REST to have two more items than the list of HANDLE stems.[6] Other sources on Nav. classificatory verb stems give slightly different lists. Let us look at chart (5), a comparison of lists of stems in the literature on Nav., including the two lists from Young and Morgan just mentioned. A plus sign means that the stem is listed, a minus sign that it is not. The question mark shows that Garrison (1974:456-587, 578-581) has doubts about the classificatory status of the stems LPB, HM, and -jid.

(5) Comparisons of stem lists in the literature on Navajo

Nav. stem:	Gloss:	Y. & M. (1987: 128)	Hoijer (1945)	Y. & M. (1987: 194)	Reichard (1952: 339-351)	Garrison (1974)
-'ą́	SRO	+	+	+	+	+
-jaa'	PLO2	+	+	+	+	+
-ką́	CC	+	+	+	+	+
-lá	SFO	+	+	+	+	+
-nil	PLO1	+	+	+	+	+
-tį́	ANO	+	+	+	+	+
-tą́	SSO	+	+	+	+	+
-tłéé'	MM	+	+	+	+	+
-jool	NCM	+	+	+	+	+
-tsooz	FFO	+	+	+	+	+
-yį́	LPB	+	_	+	+	?
-ziid	LM	-	+	+	-	+
-zhóód	HM	-	+	+	+	?
-zhoozh	(see text)	-	+	-	+	+
-kaad	(see text)	-	-	-	+	+
-jéé'	(see text)	-	-	-	+	-
-jid	(see text)	-	-	-	-	?

Note in chart (5) that sources other than Young and Morgan add one or more stems, which I have not mentioned in chart (4). Hoijer (1945) adds -zhoozh 'set of parallel objects'; Reichard (1952:339-351) calls the set under discussion "Type Verbs" and adds -zhoozh, -kaad 'vegetation, spread out', and -jéé' 'plural objects'. Garrison (1974:5), probably the most extensive analysis of the Nav. system, adds -zhoozh, -kaad, and has doubts about -jid 'burden on one's back'. He also has doubts about LPB and HM. Note also that some of these authors omit stems given in Young and Morgan (1987:194): Hoijer omits LPB, and Reichard (1952) omits LM.

It would be simplistic to say that some of the sources above were incomplete or too inclusive. Rather, it seems that Nav. speakers are in agreement that Young and Morgan's (1987:128) eleven HANDLE stems are classificatory stems, but that beyond those, that is, farther down the list in (5), there is some uncertainty, possibly starting at LPB already. I suggest we consider the first ten stems in (5) to be the prototypical classificatory stems, and that LPB (possibly), LM, and HM, are less good examples, and that the others given by Hoijer (1945), Reichard (1952) and Garrison (1974), are even worse examples of classificatory verbs. Furthermore, one would expect the non-prototypical cases to look classificatory by certain semantic or morphological criteria, but not to look classificatory by other criteria.

If this is so, one might ask what my criteria were for building the list of stems in chart (4). I checked the WA stems with native speakers, and then checked for Nav. with Young and Morgan, to see if they could occur with two derivational strings: (1) si-Perfective meaning 'for object to be in position' and the (2) P-aa ni-Imperfective or ni-Perfective, meaning 'to give (object) to P'. P is the object of the postposition. So, on the basis of these purely morphological criteria, one obtains list (4) for Nav. and WA.[7] But there is something arbitrary about these morphological criteria, since they artificially (albeit conveniently) sweep the fuzziness of the system under the rug. The fuzziness resides in the fact that if I had used other morphological criteria, I would have gotten the same core or prototypical list, but differences in non-prototypical cases such as LM, HM, or maybe LPB.

Let us see what happens if one uses slightly different morphological criteria. Hoijer (1945:10) has a different set of morphological criteria for deciding which Nav. stems are classificatory, allowing him to decide that -zhoozh is classificatory. I have to exclude it, since in Young and Morgan (1992:793-795) -zhoozh has the si-Perfective, but not the P-aa ni-Imperfective or ni-Perfective.[8] I would certainly consider -zhoozh to be non-prototypical. Garrison, who relies more on semantic than on morphological criteria, also points out that the stem -jid does not have a si-Perfective (1974:458), certainly evidence that this is not a good classificatory stem.[9]

Let us now compare Basso's (1990) list of WA classificatory verb stems to the WA list in chart (4). One difference is the lack of the stems BC, and NCM in Basso's account. Is this just coincidence, or is there some reason why Basso's elicitation did not produce these verbs? I suggest they might have been missed, because Basso's consultants didn't think of them, and they didn't think of them because they were not prototypically classificatory stems. I am aware of the danger of circularity here. Let me make comparisons with Nav. to strengthen the case somewhat. The NCM category exists in WA and in Nav., but they are completely different stems, which suggest something about their marginal status and possible non-prototypicality. The BC category does not exist in Nav., which again might suggest something about its marginal status and possible non-prototypicality in other languages.[10]

Basso's list is also different from (4) by including a stem not mentioned by anyone else: Perfective -lǭǫ̨z (Imperfective -lǭǫ̨s), glossed as 'nonportable animate beings' to be distinguished from ANO, which he glosses 'portable animate beings' (1990:11). My WA consultants point out that portability is irrelevant, and that the stem for 'nonportable animate beings' actually means 'to lead by the hand'. It is only used for humans such as children, elderly or incapacitated people who need assistance. So, one would want to exclude -lǭǫ̨z from the classificatory verb system. However, Basso's inclusion of -lǭǫ̨z makes sense since it can be used with the P-aa ni-Imperfective or ni-Perfective. An example with the P-aa ni-Imperfective is (6):

(6) Nidizhé shaa ńlǭǫ̨s.
Lead your little sister to me.

However, there is no si-Perfective *silǭǫ̨z, presumably meaning 's/he is held by the hand, in position'. This is morphological evidence that it is certainly not a prototypical stem, but maybe a very non-prototypical one.

If my consultants are correct, and if the facts are the same for Basso's Cibecue variety, one might conclude that Basso was mistaken in including 'portability' as a semantic component of the stem system. But then again, if portability is not relevant to the prototypical stems or to -lǭǫ̨z, it seems relevant to some non-prototypical stems, such as HM in

Nav., which refers to objects too massive and bulky to be carried. We could say then that Basso is correct in considering portability to be relevant, but only if it is considered a non-prototypical semantic component.

Let us now turn to a discussion of the second kind of prototypes, i.e. the differences between prototypical and non-prototypical meanings of individual stems. I will illustrate this with WA data only, but I am sure that there are similar instances in the other Apachean and Athabaskan languages.

In (7), I summarize the meanings of the WA stems given in (4), departing from the abbreviations.[11] I use some of the wording of Basso's (1990:1-14) account.

(7)

ANO:	One animal or one human being.
BC:	Objects in one non-rigid container, regardless of the properties of its contents. Thus, it is used for the bag with its contents, not for an empty bag, which would be FFO, nor for just the contents. Strictly speaking, this verb stem is the same as the SSO stem, since it is derived from it by the addition of the thematic classifier *-ɬ-*. The meaning is different enough to make it count as a separate stem.
FFO:	One uncontained solid inanimate object, that is not rigid and whose length is less than three times as great as its width or height. Such an object is typically manufactured from paper or cloth, but objects such as a tortilla or buckskin also fit in this category.
LM:	Liquids, or pourable substances such as sand or flour, but not their containers.
LPB:	Inanimate objects in piles, loads, packs, or burdens, regardless of consistency, length, rigidity, or number. The pile can be a pile of containers.
MM:	One uncontained mass of inanimate mushy material, such as mud, pudding, or soggy cereal.
NCM:	One uncontained mass of inanimate non-compact and fluffy material, container, such as wool, loose hay, tangled hair, wads of cotton, and yarn.

OC: Inanimate objects, regardless of consistency, length, rigidity, or number, that are in one rigid container. The container must have a wide opening, such as wide baskets, bowls, cups, glasses, plates, and trays. For containers with a relatively narrow opening, such as bottles, buckets, jars, shakers, soda cans, etc., the SRO stem must be used. For objects in non-rigid containers such as a bag, the BC stem must be used.

PFO: Refers to two different things. It can refer to more than two uncontained solid inanimate objects, that are not rigid. It can also refer to any uncontained object(s) of any size, shape, consistency, and in any quantity, usually if the speaker is not sure of the properties of the object referred to.

PLO1: More than two solid uncontained inanimate objects, that are rigid, regardless of shape. The difference between PLO1 and PLO2 is that the items referred to by PLO1 can be fairly large, and easily individuated such as cars, boxes, or barrels. Objects referred to by PLO2 tend to be of smaller size and less easily individuated, such as acorns, coins, beads, beans, grains, etc..

PLO2: More than two solid uncontained inanimate objects, that are rigid, regardless of shape. For the difference between PLO2 and PLO1, see the description under PLO1.

SFO: Refers to two different things. It can refer to one uncontained, solid, inanimate object, that is not rigid and whose length is at least three times greater than its width or height. It can also refer to two inanimate objects, regardless of consistency, length, rigidity, and whether they are in containers or not.

SRO: One uncontained, solid, inanimate object, that is rigid and whose length is less than three times as great as its width or height, regardless of size. Also, metaphorically, for certain abstract concepts such as blame, gossip, or message.

SSO: One uncontained solid, inanimate object, that its rigid, and whose length is at least three times greater than one of its other dimensions. The object referred to can be sticklike, such as a cane or a rifle, or flat, such as a plank,

board or a door. So it does not have to be slender in more than one dimension.

To illustrate the descriptions in (7), consider the groups of contrasting San Carlos Apache sentences in (8a-8n), all with the si- Perfective. In each group, the object in position is the same, but notice how the meaning in the sentence differs due to the information conveyed by the stem.

(8a)	Ákū bé'ísts'ǫ́z shijaa.	The beans are there (in a bunch).
	Ákū bé'ísts'ǫ́z sikąą́.	The beans are there (in a cup or plate).
	Ákū bé'ísts'ǫ́z siɬtąą́.	The beans are there (in a bag).
(8b)	Kū béstsoh shijaa.	Here are the dollars (in dollar coins).
	Kū béstsoh nakih silāā.	Here are the two dollars.
	Kū béstsoh siné'.	Here are the dollars (indeterminate form).
	Kū béstsoh dáɬa'á sitsooz.	Here is the one-dollar bill.
(8c)	Bésts'osé nláhyú si'ąą́.	The wire (in a bale) is way over there.
	Bésts'osé nláhyú silāā.	The wire (loose) is way over there.
(8d)	Kū ch'id sitsooz.	Here is the blanket.
	Kū ch'id siyį̄į̄.	Here is the pile or pack of blankets.
(8e)	Ákū gah silāā.	Two rabbits (dead or stuffed) are there.
	Ákū gah sinil.	A bunch of rabbits (dead or stuffed) is there.
	Ákū gah sitį̄į̄.	The rabbit is (lying) there.
(8f)	Kū goshtɬ'ish siɬēēd.	Here is the mud (in a blob).
	Kū goshtɬ'ish sikąą́.	Here is the mud (in an open container, as when children make mud pies).

(8g)	Ik'án sikąąą.	There is flour (in a cup or plate).
	Ik'án siɬtąąą.	There is flour (in a bag).
	Ik'án siyɻɻ.	There is flour (in a pile of bags).
(8h)	Shikee ni'yú si'ąąą.	My shoe is on the floor.
	Nikee ni'yú silāā.	Your shoes (a pair) are on the floor.
	Nohwikee ni'yú sinil.	Our shoes (more than one pair) are on the floor.
(8i)	Kū ɬɻɻ bitɬ'oh si'ąąą.	Here is the hay (in a bale).
	Kū ɬɻɻ bitɬ'oh silāā.	Here is the hay (in two bags).
	Kū ɬɻɻ bitɬ'oh siɬtąąą.	Here is the hay (in one bag).
	Kū ɬɻɻ bitɬ'oh sitsoo.	Here is the hay (loose).
	Kū ɬɻɻ bitɬ'oh siyɻɻ.	Here is the hay (in a pile or a pile of bales).
(8j)	Ta'nil sikąąą.	There is (a bowl of) gravy.
	Ta'nil sitɬēēd.	There is gravy (as a blob accidentally dropped on the floor).
(8k)	Ákū tū si'ąąą.	The water is there (in a bottle).
	Ákū tū sikąąą.	The water is there (in a cup or plate).
	Ákū tū siziid.	The water is there (poured, as a puddle).
(8l)	Kū tsēē si'ąąą.	Here is the rock.
	Kū tsēē shijaa.	Here are the rocks, pebbles (smaller size).
	Kū tsēē sikąąą.	Here are the rocks (in a cup or plate).
	Kū tsēē silāā.	Here are two rocks.
	Kū tsēē sinil.	Here are the rocks (larger size).
	Kū tsēē siɬtąąą.	Here are the rocks (in a bag).
	Kū tsēē siyɻɻ.	Here is a pile or load of rocks.

(8m)	Tsēē álne'í ni'yú si'ą́ą́.	The cement (hardened in a chunk, or hardened in its bag) is on the floor.
	Tsēē álne'í ni'yú silāā.	The two bags of cement are on the floor.
	Tsēē álne'í ni'yú siné'.	The cement is on the floor.
	Tsēē álne'í ni'yú siłtą́ą́.	The cement (in a bag) is on the floor.
	Tsēē álne'í ni'yú sitłēēd.	The wet cement is on the floor.
(8n)	Kū niyo' shijaa.	Here are your beads (in a group).
	Kū niyo' siką́ą́.	Here are your beads (in a cup or plate).
	Kū niyo' silāā.	Here are your beads (in a string, or in two necklaces).
	Kū niyo' siłtą́ą́.	Here are your beads (in a bag).

The sentences in (8) illustrate prototypical usages of the stems, which consultants readily volunteer. However, Rosch (1975) has suggested that prototypical usages are easier to elicit than non-prototypical usages. This is certainly true regarding the elicitation of WA stems, and accounts for some differences between my analysis and Basso's.

Basso (1990) elicited classificatory verb stems by presenting the consultant with verb frames, which require the insertion of an actual noun. This has several interesting consequences. First, the PFO stem -né' is considered to refer to a "plurality of flexible objects" only. As we have seen in (7), another usage of the PFO stem is for objects with characteristics unknown to the speaker, which is not something that can be elicited with frames.

Second, by requiring the insertion of an actual noun, the consultant will think of concrete objects before the (always fuzzier) abstract objects, which accounts for Basso's lack of mention of the abstract usages of the SRO (in (7)) (Philip Greenfeld (p.c.)).

Third, native speakers of WA can use a verb stem appropriate for inanimate objects to refer to people or animals, for humorous or derogatory purposes. Such very non-prototypical usages were pointed out by Rushforth (1991) for Mesc., and by Sapir (1932), and Willie (2000) for

Nav.. In elicitation situations, such usages will not occur, and so it is not surprising that they were missed by Basso's (1990) account of WA.

I will conclude with some WA examples of this kind of non-prototypical usage. In WA, it is not uncommon to refer to a human being with the verb sitłēēd, literally 'MM is in position', which for this purpose can be conjugated in subject persons other than the third. One does this to jokingly refer to the position of a human or an animal which is lazy, flabby, or worthless. Examples are in (9):

(9) Hayú síntłēēd?
Where are you? (you lazy or flabby thing)

Kū sítłēēd.
I am slouched down here!

Shidēē dázhǫ́ kásdáhá di'ílégo nneezi yiká' sitłēēdgo o'i'áh.
My younger sibling usually just lies around on the sofa all day.

There are also non-prototypical usages of sitłēēd that do not refer to animate beings. An example is (10), to be compared with the prototypical usages in (8a).

(10) Ákū bé'ísts'ǫ́z sitłēēd.
The beans are there.

(10) could be used to refer to a blob of refried beans, but since the MM stem tends to refer prototypically to unappetizing matter or consistencies such as mud, (10) can easily be taken as an insult to the cook. Similarly, ta'nil sitłēēd (8j) can refer to a blob of gravy accidentally dropped on the floor, which is something unappetizing, but it would cause offense if it was used simply to refer to someone's gravy.

Notes

[1]Ignoring reference grammars and dictionaries, some studies on the topic are: Hoijer (1945), Davidson, Elford and Hoijer (1963), Henry (1965), Landar (1967), Basso (1968, reprinted 1990), Krauss (1968), Witherspoon (1971, 1977), Benally and Fasthorse (1973), Garrison (1973), Carter (1976), Liebe-Harkort (1984), Cook (1986), Rushforth (1991), Jette (2000), Willie (2000), and Meek and Jules (2001).

[2]Western Apache is a Southern Athabaskan or Apachean language spoken by about 13,000 people on and near five reservations in west-central and central Arizona. There are four major varieties of Western Apache: Cibecue, San Carlos, Tonto, and White Mountain. The data in this paper are from the San Carlos variety only, but there is little dialectal variation within Western Apache concerning classificatory verb stems.

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[4]HANDLE, BE AT REST, and KEEP AT REST form a system for the following reasons. BE AT REST and KEEP AT REST are easily derivable from BE AT REST since KEEP AT REST is nothing but BE AT REST with a transitivizing *-ɬ-* added. In view of the importance of motion in Athabaskan languages, one would expect HANDLE to pattern with PROPEL and with MOVE INDEPENDENTLY, which are all motion verbs, and not with AT REST. I think the answer lies in Young and Morgan's (1987:128) description of HANDLE, given in (a):

(a) Handle = the movement of an object or objects by continuing physical contact, as in carry, hand or lower down, pick up, put, take

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